United Nations S/2000/444

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 May 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 17 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward the attached copy of a letter from Mr. Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, addressed to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

00-43658 (E) 170500

Annex to the letter dated 17 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to bring to your attention the grave danger that has struck the people of Eritrea as a result of Ethiopia's aggression against their country. This latest Ethiopian aggression has resulted in its occupation of large areas of the western region of the country, including the regional capital — Barentu. Consequently, over 500,000 Eritreans are fleeing from the invading army and find themselves scattered in the wilderness without any shelter or food.

It is to be recalled that Eritrea had repeatedly warned the United Nations and the international community that Ethiopia's ultimate objective since the beginning of this war of aggression has been the obliteration of Eritrean independence and sovereignty. The unfolding events of the last week are now ample proof of our warning.

Ethiopia's naked aggression is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations as well as several international and regional instruments. It threatens international peace and security as well as regional stability and development. It also ignores the provisions of Security Council resolution 1297 (2000) of 12 May 2000 which reaffirms the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of both Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The behaviour demonstrated by Ethiopia, that is, the fulfilment of its territorial ambitions at the expense of a neighbour's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity in complete disregard of its obligations under the Charter, strikes at the core of the United Nations and what it stands for. It sends a message to the world, and particularly to the small Members of the United Nations, that no nation can be safe from the expansionist lust of its bigger neighbours.

The United Nations is now at a critical juncture of its history. It is clear that any failure by the United Nations to apply the principles of collective security and to reverse Ethiopia's aggression today will result in the forfeiture of its moral and legal authority to maintain and ensure international peace and security.

It is for this reason that Eritrea addresses the United Nations to be faithful to the principles of its Charter and to fulfil its duties by preventing the annihilation of Eritrean independence or the dismemberment of its territory with the application of the necessary collective security measures provided by the Charter. Its failure will prove that the secure conditions for lawful inter-State relations do not exist and the future of mankind will once again be endangered.

Isaias **Afwerki**
President
The State of Eritrea